

# The Emerging Stages of Ethnicity: Implications for Staff Development

James A. Banks

*A new typology suggests staff development guidelines for helping educators work more effectively with ethnically and racially diverse groups of students.*

When planning staff development programs for school personnel, we tend to assume that ethnic groups are monolithic and have rather homogeneous needs and characteristics. However, ethnic groups are highly diverse, complex, and changing entities. To be most effective, staff development programs must recognize and reflect the complex and diverse ethnic identities and characteristics of individual educators. To reflect the myriad and emerging ethnic identities of educators, we must make some attempt to identify them and to describe their programmatic and curricular implications.<sup>1</sup>

## A New Typology

This article describes a typology that attempts to outline the basic stages of the development of ethnicity among *individual* members of ethnic groups. The typology is a

preliminary ideal type construct in the Weberian sense and constitutes a set of hypotheses based on the existing and emerging theory and research and on the author's observations and study of ethnic behavior. The typology is presented to stimulate discussion and research and to suggest preliminary guidelines for staff development programs whose major goal is to help educators to function more effectively in ethnically pluralistic educational environments.

I hypothesize that an educator's ability to work in ethnically pluralistic situations will increase as his or her stage of ethnicity increases. Consequently, a major goal of staff development programs should be to help educators to function at increasingly higher stages of ethnicity.

*Stage 1. Ethnic Psychological Captivity:* During this stage the individual internalizes the negative ideologies and beliefs about his/her ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> For a rationale for staff development programs related to ethnicity see: The National Council for the Social Studies, Task Force on Ethnic Studies Curriculum Guidelines (James A. Banks, Carlos E. Cortés, Geneva Gay, Ricardo L. Garcia, and Anna S. Ochoa). *Curriculum Guidelines for Multiethnic Education*. Arlington, Virginia: the Council, 1976.

group that are institutionalized within the society. Consequently, the Stage-1 person exemplifies ethnic self-rejection and low self-esteem. The individual is ashamed of his/her ethnic group and identity during this stage and may respond in a number of ways, including avoiding situations that lead to contact with other ethnic groups or striving aggressively to become highly culturally assimilated.

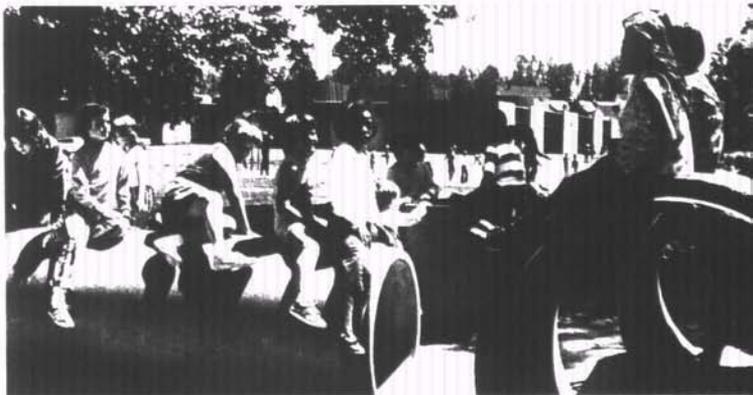
*Stage 2. Ethnic Encapsulation:* Stage 2 is characterized by ethnic encapsulation and ethnic exclusiveness, including voluntary separatism. The individual participates primarily within his/her own ethnic community and believes that his/her ethnic group is superior to that of others. Many Stage-2 individuals, such as many Anglo-Americans, have internalized the dominant societal myths about the superiority of their ethnic or racial group and the innate inferiority of other ethnic groups and races. Many individuals who are socialized within all-white suburban communities and who live highly ethnocentric and encapsulated lives may be described as Stage-2 individuals. Alice Miel describes these kinds of individuals in *The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia*.<sup>2</sup>

*Stage 3. Ethnic Identity Clarification:* At this stage the individual is able to clarify personal attitudes and ethnic identity, to reduce intrapsychic conflict, and to develop positive attitudes toward his/her ethnic group. The individual learns to accept self, thus developing the characteristics needed to accept and respond more positively to outside ethnic groups. Self-acceptance is a requisite to accepting and responding positively to others.

*Stage 4. Biethnicity:* Individuals within this stage have a healthy sense of ethnic identity and the psy-

chological characteristics and skills needed to participate successfully in their own ethnic culture, as well as in another ethnic culture. The individual also has a strong desire to function effectively in two ethnic cultures. We may describe such an individual as *biethnic*.

*Stage 5. Multiethnicity:* Stage 5 describes the idealized goal for citizenship identity within an ethnically pluralistic nation. The individual at this stage is able to function, at least



at minimal levels, within several ethnic sociocultural environments and to understand, appreciate, and share the values, symbols, and institutions of several ethnic cultures. Such multiethnic perspectives and feelings, I hypothesize, help the individual to live a more enriched and fulfilling life and to formulate more creative and novel solutions to personal and public problems.

### Characteristics of the Typology

The emerging stages of ethnicity typology is an ideal type construct and should be viewed as dynamic and multidimensional rather



<sup>2</sup> Alice Miel with Edwin Kiester, Jr. *The Shortchanged Children of Suburbia*. New York: Institute of Human Relations Press, The American Jewish Committee, 1967.

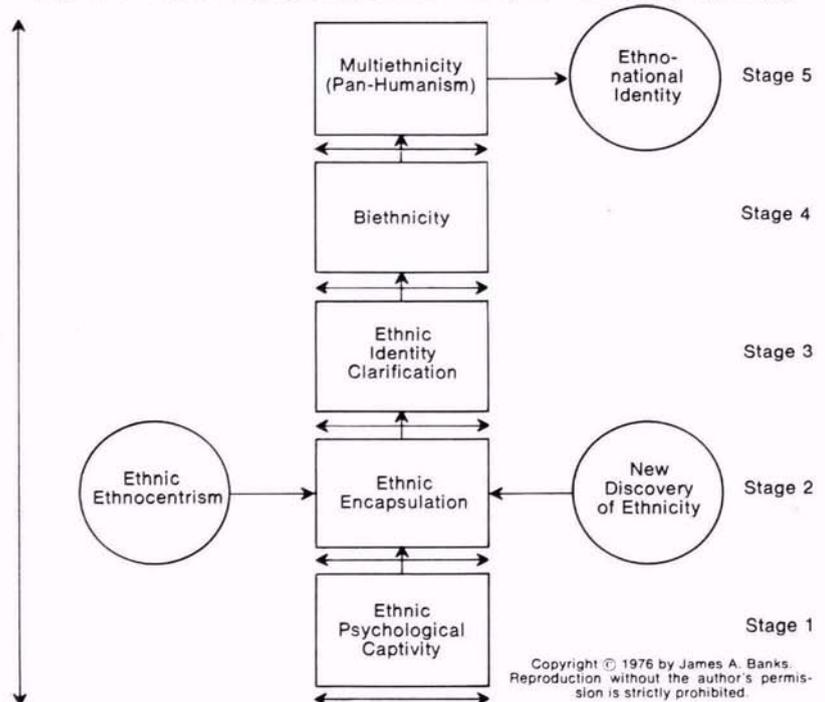
than as static and unilinear. The characteristics within the stages exist on a continuum. Thus, within Stage 1, individuals are more or less ethnically psychologically captive; some individuals are more ethnically psychologically captive than others.

The division between the stages is blurred rather than sharp. Thus, a continuum exists between, as well as within, the stages. The ethnically encapsulated individual (Stage 2) does not suddenly attain clarification and acceptance of personal ethnic identity (Stage 3). This is a gradual and developmental process. Also, the stages should not be viewed as strictly sequential and unilinear. I am hypothesizing that some individuals may never experience a particular stage. However, I also hypothesize that, once an individual experiences a particular stage, that person is likely to experience the stages above it sequen-

tially and developmentally. I hypothesize, however, that individuals may experience the stages upward, downward, or in a zigzag pattern. Under certain conditions, for example, the biethnic (Stage 4) individual may become multiethnic (Stage 5); under new conditions the same individual may become again biethnic (Stage 4), ethnically identified (Stage 3), and ethnically encapsulated (Stage 2). Many individual members of Northern white ethnic groups became increasingly more ethnically encapsulated as busing for school desegregation gained momentum in Northern cities such as Boston.

Figure 1. illustrates the dynamic and multidimensional characteristics of the development of ethnicity among individuals. Note especially the arrowed lines, which indicate that continua exist both horizontally and vertically.

Figure 1. The Emerging Stages of Ethnicity: A Preliminary Typology



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## Implications for Staff Development

The discussion below consists of a set of *tentative hypotheses* that merit testing by teacher educators and researchers who are interested in more appropriately matching the staff development curriculum with the levels of ethnicity exemplified by educators.

I am hypothesizing that every staff development program will consist of educators who exemplify a range of ethnicity stages. Consequently, each staff trainer will need to be skilled in implementing the curricular implications of each of the stages. The instructor's major goal should be to increase the educator's stage of ethnicity, regardless of his or her present stage of ethnic development. Even when an educator is functioning at Stage 5, the instructor's goal should be to help the individual to function at Stage 5 more competently.

The educator within Stage 1 can best benefit from experiences that will help him/her to develop ethnic awareness and a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness. Many of the strategies and techniques that can benefit the Stage-1 individual are monoethnic in the sense that they focus on the person's ethnic group. Although the focus of study for the Stage-1 educator will be on his/her own ethnic group, knowledge about other ethnic groups will often be needed to help the educator to better understand his/her own ethnic group and the interrelationships among and between different groups.

A strong affective component that helps educators to clarify their negative ethnic and racial feelings should be a major part of the staff development program for Stage-2 individuals. In Stage 3, values clarification, moral development, and conceptual teaching strategies should be used to enhance the individual's



emerging ethnic identity clarification. Strategies should be used to help Stage-4 individuals to relate positively to their own ethnic groups and to another ethnic group. The staff development program for Stage 5 should be designed to help the educator to develop a global sense of ethnic literacy and to master concepts and generalizations about a wide range of ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> When educators are able to function at increasingly higher stages of ethnicity, they will be able to work more effectively with students from diverse ethnic and racial groups. [E]

<sup>3</sup> See: James A. Banks. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1975.



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